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United States Department of Agriculture
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.

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THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY AND NEED FOR RELAYING NUTRITION INFORMATION
TO LOW INCOME FARM FAMILIES THROUGH FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION WORKERS

By Elizabeth A. Rivers, Chief, Home Management, Region II,
Farm Security Administration. /1

In December 1939, the Farm Security Administration made a rather inclusive progress report on all its families, covering the past two calendar years. These figures, while they may not be entirely accurate, do show the trend of the program, and enable us to present for your attention a few outstanding facts.

The first is the large number of standard cases and grants and the small number of home-management supervisors. From the figures below, brought down to March 31, 1939, you can readily calculate the average case load in your own State.

Cumulative Figures as of March 31, 1939

<u>Regions and States</u>	<u>Number of home-management supervisors</u>	<u>Number of families (standard cases)</u>
<u>Region II</u>		
Minnesota	23	8,575
Michigan	24	6,228
Wisconsin	23	7,472
<u>Region III</u>		
Illinois	30	7,182
Indiana	34	8,626
Iowa	35	8,554
Missouri	87	18,501
Ohio	51	11,545
<u>Region IV</u>		
Kentucky	41	7,915
<u>Region VII</u>		
Kansas	29	7,309
Nebraska	37	9,273
N. Dakota	28	5,155
S. Dakota	26	7,138

The amount of funds available for loans for the coming year should increase the standard case load materially. With good crops and gardens, the number of grants may be materially reduced this next year.

/1 Prepared for Central States Extension Conference, Minneapolis, Minn.,
July 24-27, 1939.

We estimate the number of children of all ages in standard case families in Region II as about 3,300. This estimate is based on an average family membership of four to five persons, the number of families, and an allowance of two children per family. The figure of 71,000 children in Region III, which includes the five States of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri, has been calculated on the basis of the 1930 census figures for farm population. Slightly more than half these children are estimated to be between 10 and 19 years of age.

We estimate that in Region II, probably from 1,000 to 1,500 boys and girls from Farm Security families were enrolled in 4-H Clubs in December 1938, and probably from 400 to 500 women in each State are enrolled in extension groups. In the Midwest, 4-H Club enrollment is greater in spring and summer than in winter, since several States organize their project programs to cover the spring and summer months. A survey in the five States of Region III as of May 31, 1939, showed cumulative totals of around 5,500 boys and girls and around 5,000 women participating in extension activities. By far the largest number in each case were in Missouri, which has much the largest number of standard cases.

Our 1938 survey indicates that in several of the Central States about one family in seven "had access" to a pressure cooker. Some States do considerably better. "Access" may mean borrowing a cooker from the Farm Security Administration office. However, ownership of pressure cookers will be much larger another year. Adequate storage space is a very great problem among our families, particularly our northern areas.

Of great significance to extension workers and Farm Security Administration home economists who have worked together on the problem of nutrition and food production programs for these families, are the figures showing the increase in the average amount of food produced throughout the country. I assume these figures are available for each county through the F. S. A. in your State. While we have no real assurance that these figures are absolutely accurate, the vast number of cases included tends at least to indicate a trend of which we can all be very proud.

Increase in food produced per family from 1937 to 1938

	<u>1937</u>	<u>1938</u>	<u>Percentage increase</u>
Canned fruit and vegetables	51 qt.	221 qt.	331
Milk	99 gal.	465 gal.	370
Eggs	32 dz.	120 dz.	275
Meat	85 lb.	377 lb.	344

With four to five persons in the family, this still leaves much to be desired. Many families still have a long, long way to go in supplying their needs.

We believe that there has been definite progress in the nutrition of these families, but we have no good way to measure actual health changes due to the changed diet. We would like some way to measure this progress and are hoping you will be able in your discussions to arrive at some simple, practical scheme which we may use to show actual progress in improved nutrition made through the food-production program.

In closing, I wish very briefly to express to you first, our appreciation for all you have done in the past (a) to help prepare our home supervisors for the job they are facing, through your cooperation in State training conferences; (b) to provide us with printed and mimeographed material for the use of the home-management supervisor and for the families; (c) to cooperate in the field with our workers and the families in providing first-hand assistance in meeting and solving problems.

Second, I would like to emphasize that we need and want your continued help in the future. Our load is growing -- our staff is limited, and we have no specialists.

We can and do find the problems, but we lack the time and ability to work out the subject-matter sheets, the work sheets, the record forms, the progress measurement scales, etc., with which to help families solve their problems, and measure the success of their food production and home-management program. We can provide the testing ground for any simple, practical devices you may wish to provide.

We would like to tell you of our detailed needs, but time does not permit. Believe us, however, when we say, they are numerous.

We believe that there has been definite progress in the situation at these facilities. But we have no good way to measure actual health changes and we are hoping you will be able to give us some idea of how things are going. We would like some way to measure this progress and we are hoping you will be able to give us some idea of how things are going. We would like some way to measure this progress and we are hoping you will be able to give us some idea of how things are going.

In closing, I wish very briefly to express to you that we are very grateful for all you have done in the past (a) to help prepare our own organization for the job that we are facing, through your cooperation in these various commitments; (b) to provide us with practical and meaningful information for the use of the management committee and for the facilities; (c) to cooperate in the field with our workers and the facilities in providing first-aid assistance in testing and solving problems.

Second, I would like to emphasize that we need and want your continued help in the future. Our need is growing -- our staff is limited, and we have no specialists.

We can and do find the problems, but we lack the time and ability to deal with the subject-matter directly, the work situation, the general tone, the program management, etc., with which we have to deal. We need your help, and we need the services of their food program and health program. We can provide the testing ground for our studies. Practical decisions you may wish to provide.

We would like to tell you of our detailed needs, but time does not permit. Believe me, however, when we say, they are numerous.